Executive Council
Justice
September 15, 2008

Provincial Government Partners with Community Groups to Combat Sexual Violence

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, along with the Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre and other community groups from across the province, are coming together to raise awareness about sexual violence during Sexual Violence Awareness Week 2008.

From September 15 to 19, events are planned across the province with the intent to draw attention to the issue of sexual violence and provide public education.

"Supporting community groups, such as the Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre, is a primary objective of the Violence Prevention Initiative," said the Honourable Joan Burke, Minister Responsible for the Status of Women and lead Minister for the Violence Prevention Initiative. "As reflected in this year's theme – *Together, we can* - through collaboration, we can take action against violence."

The Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre is one of over 30 community groups that partner with the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's Violence Prevention Initiative. The initiative is a six-year, $9.2 million commitment by the Williams Government to reduce violence in Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Honourable Jerome Kennedy, Minister of Justice and Attorney General, signed a proclamation with Minister Burke, officially declaring this week as Sexual Violence Awareness Week. "I commend the Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre for its successes in the prevention of sexual violence in Newfoundland and Labrador and also for bringing this important week into its ninth year," said Minister Kennedy. "This is an important opportunity to educate the public about the realities of violence in our province."

The Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre provides support and essential services to those impacted by sexual violence. Services include a 24-hour crisis line (1-800-726-2743) that is accessible throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

"At the Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre we value partnerships with community groups and the Provincial Government," said Barbara Wadman, co-ordinator of the Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre. "We hope that the community will become involved in Sexual Violence Awareness Week in order to learn more about the prevalence of sexual violence, and how to work together to raise awareness and education about prevention."

During Sexual Violence Awareness Week, the centre has organized a number of events including a public information session and open house, a youth poster-making night, and a Wenlido Self Defense class. The week culminates with the annual Take Back the Night march and rally on the steps of St. John's City Hall on Friday, September 19. In recognition of the week, flags are flying half staff at the Confederation Building today (Monday, September 15).

Further information on Sexual Violence Awareness Week activities can be obtained by visiting www.EndSexualViolence.com or by calling 709-747-7757.

"I encourage everyone to participate in the events taking place in communities across Newfoundland and Labrador and to learn how to prevent sexual violence in our province," said Minister Burke.

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Photo #1: Ministers Jerome Kennedy and Joan Burke with Barbara Wadman, Andrea Milley, Catherine Dwyer, and Denise Hayes of the Newfoundland and Labrador Sexual Assault Crisis and Prevention Centre signing the proclamation declaring September 15 to 19 Sexual Violence Awareness Week.

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2008 09 15 11:50 a.m.

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